Hastings Park Ballads

BY

WALTER J. S. LAURIE

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There's Briggs, McConnell and Charlie Friend,
There's Bush, Bill Jones and Hall.
There's Dingwall and Watson, and Meredith, too,
Who answered their country's call.
There's many more, that had I space,
In this little book of rhymes.
But "dinna forget" our "pals" at the front,
And hope for return of good times—
The best is none too good for them,
For they did their duty straight,
"To our brothers who are absent, give remembrance,"
To THEM I dedicate.

—Walter J. S. Laurie.

Epitaph on General Charles Gordon.

(Died Jan. 26, 1885.)

[The following was written by my father at the time of the death of General Gordon. Realizing how aptly it also applies to Lord Kitchener, I now reproduce.—Walter J. S. Laurie.]

Behold a man of soul serene and brave,
The oppressor's foe, the champion of the slave;
Of conscience pure, untouched by taint of self,
Who mocked ambition, spurned applause and pelf.

Knight-errant of an unromantic age,
Your feats shall gild the great historic page,
Your virtues rare (that you would fain have hid)
Shall shed an afterglow on all you did.

Though "storied urn and animated bust"
Plazon the fame of heroes turned to dust,
Yet all shall crumble ere your chosen tomb,
Shall be forgot by ages yet unborn—Khartoum.

—J. S. Laurie.

The Battery Boys.

(By Walter Laurie.)

They call them the "Battery Boys," and they're
quartered way out at the Park,
They're a rollicking bunch, and the best you can
find, and ready for fun or a lark.
Meet them where you may, either here or those
"overseas,"
They are always the same old "Sixty-eighth,"
always ready and willing to please.
With the "Battery yell" so weird, that it sounds
like an Indian chant,
And you'll know it, if you can "get it right,"
if you don't, of course, you can't.

Osh wa, osh wa—sh—sh—s. s. s.—(pause)
Hika Jacki, Hika Jacki, Holloma, Jollima, Gee,
Rickety Raggedy, Rickety Raggedy, Who Are
We?
We are the boys of the Artillery, ch-hee, ch-ha,
ch-ha, ha, ha.
Sixty-eighth Battery, rah, rah, rah—(pause)—
Vancouver.

"The right of the line, and the "left of the
pay," with dragropes, prepare to advance,
And "action front," and "action rear," don't
stand there in a trance!
Remember boys, and don't forget, it's "double"
all the day,
"And then we'll have the riding test," you'll
hear the sergeant say—
And then, the lectures follow on, rope splicing
and the chores,

And stable drill and musketry, till your back
seems full of sores,
But then "Dismiss" comes round at last, to the
cook house they do chant,
And you'll know it if you "get it right," if you
don't, of course, you can't.
Osh wa, etc.

It's Nine o'Clock; Fall In.

(By Walter Laurie.)

[The new Military Order placing the Hotels "out of bounds" after 9 o'clock in the evening for His Majesty's fighting and thirsty forces inspired the following]:

Gol darn it, lad, it's tough, I know, and all that
sort of thing,
But War is War and Rules is Rules (and new
ones they will spring);
I know it's going to hurt at first, for the street
to make a steer,
And leave the genial friends behind, and the
great big flowing beer;
But War is War and Rules is Rules, though some
of 'em seems a sin,
But, nevertheless, you've got to go—
IT'S NINE O'CLOCK; FALL IN!

You know we hate to see you go, but the best of
friends must part.
To Hastings Park you must wend your way, so
please do make a start;
At ten o'clock 'twill be "Lights Out," and all
must go to bed,

So grab a jitney, or a car, and you will be ahead.
The night is spent, the tale is told, and a good
one it has been;
But, nevertheless, you've got to go—
IT'S NINE O'CLOCK; FALL IN!

We do not know, we cannot tell, what the future
has in store,
But here's a hope to meet again, and tell the
story o'er.
Perhaps we'll soon be with you lad, if you need
us, we will come,
With a friendly clasp and a lifted chin, that
helps some, my boy, helps some,
But we've quaffed our beer, and swapped our
yarn, to leave all seems a sin,
But, nevertheless, you've got to go—
IT'S NINE O'CLOCK; FALL IN!

Vancouver, Nov 17, 1916.

It's Twelve o'Clock; Fall Out.

(Walter Laurie.)

[As the boys seemed to appreciate "NINE O'CLOCK; FALL IN," I have much pleasure in presenting the companion poem.]

As he marches down the street, 'tis wonderful to
see
The smile of perfect happiness and enthusiastic
glee,
The band is playing the closing march, the pipes
have ceased their sounds,
For the Colonel says, "At Twelve o'clock, dis-
miss, at Cambie grounds."

And then the hill is climbed at last, and by the hall they swing,
"Left wheel," the sergeant shouts, "Form up on the left wing."
And soon in double file they stand, all soldiers there's no doubt,
A smart, "Right turn," and a swift salute—
IT'S TWELVE O'CLOCK; FALL OUT.

Then down the town they wend their way, for pleasure's their pursuit,
Some meet their wives and kiddies there, some grab the gay recruit,
The noontide hour has sped at last, the "movie" shows are near,
And many hasten on their way to meet the one so dear.

For, "What's the use of kicking, for they've 'got it on' them all,
For their King and Country needed them, and they answered to the call,
A soldier and a good one, of that there is no doubt,
But he likes to hear the Colonel say—
IT'S TWELVE O'CLOCK; FALL OUT!

The brave boys in the fighting line—to them we wish our best;
In the cold, and the wet, of the trenches there, they face the fearful test;
The crash of the shell, and the reek of the gas, the vermin, the long, long night,
And the glare of the "Star Shell" and search-light reveal what to him is an ordinary sight.

A peep in the night—a rocket ascends—a crack
from a sniper's gun—
"Good-bye, old pal, he got me then," and that
was only one.
There was no order given there—beyond a warning shout,
And like a soldier he met his end, and at—
TWELVE O'CLOCK, FELL OUT.

Hoch Der Kaiser.

[These verses were recited and became famous at a Union League Club dinner in New York to some naval officers on April 21, 1899. It took three years to quiet the international vibrations.]

Der Kaiser of dis Fatherland
Und Gott on high all dings command,
Ve two—ach! Don't you understand,
Myself—und Gott!

Vile some men sing der power divine
Mine soldiers sing "Die Wacht am Rhein,"
Und drink der health in a Rheinish wine
Of Me—und Gott!

Dere's France, she swaggers all aroundt,
She's ausgespielt.
To much me think she don't amount;
Myself—und Gott!

She will not dare to fight again,
But if she shouldt, I'll show her blain
Dot Elsass und (in French) Lorraine
Are Mein—by Gott!

Der's grandma dinks she is nicht small beer,
Midt Boers und such she interferes;
She'll learn none owns dis hemisphere
But Me—und Gott!

She dinks, good frau, some ships she's got
Und soldiers midt her scarlet goat.
Ach! We could knock dem! Pouf! Like dot,
Myself—midt Gott!

In dimes of peace brepare for wars,
I bear der spear und helm of Mars,
Und care not for den tousand Czars,
Myself—midt Gott!

In fact, I humor efry vhim,
With aspect dark und visage grim;
He pulls mit Me und I mit him,
Myself—und Gott!

Der Kaiser und der Crown Prince.

(A burlesque on the foregoing.)

Der Kaiser call der Crown Prince in,
Und say to him: "Mein son,
I tink we go and lick der yorldt,
Dot giffs us lots of fun."

Der Crown Prince says:
"Perhaps we can't."
Der Kaiser schlapp der table,
Und say, "If I would lick dey yorldt,
By Gott, mein sohn, I'm able!"

"Der Frenchmen, what is dem to us?
I crush dem mit my t'umb,

In yoost vone week in Paris streets,
  You hear mein Deutchers' drum.

"Machts nix aus von treaties
  I show dem Belgians who I am,
I'm yoost like Teddy Roosevelt, kid;
  My word ain't wort a tamn."

I come right back from Paris quick,
  Und tackle him, der Czar,
I bet he says dam't suddenly,
  Vot fighting me we are?

"Und little George of England, too,
  I turn him on mein knee,
Und spank him so he cries out loud,
  'Ach, Kaiser, pardon me!'

"I take from him his fighting shipps,
  Und turn dem into yunk,
I make him dip his flags to mein,
  Ven all his schipps is sunk.

"Und if der Yankees gives me sass,
  I go right over dere,
Und tear der tamn olt country up—
  I vil, by Gott, I schvear.

"Der yellow Japs, dat talks so big,
  I give does fellows hell;
I make dem tink dat der planet Mars
  On top of dem has fell.

"Why, you don't know me yet, mein poy,
  You nefer seen me fight;
But dats the Gottalmightiest ding,
  In vich I take delight.

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